

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL AMSTERDAM

UNCLAS THE HAGUE 3410

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN, NL

SUBJECT: CIVAIR: AMERICAN TRAVELLERS STRANDED AT AMSTERDAM

SUMMARY - SOME 50 AMERICANS ARE STRANDED AT SCHIPHOL AIRPORT, AMSTERDAM, AS RESULT OF FACT THAT LOW-COST ONE-WAY TRANSPORTATION THEY PURCHASED HAS FALLEN THROUGH. NORTH AMERICAN TRAVEL OF AMSTERDAM IS INVOLVED AND ALLEGES THAT DIFFICULTY IS DUE TO BANKRUPTCY OF EDMONDS TRAVEL, INC., OF NEW YORK CITY. CIVILAIR AUTHORITIES ARE ENDEAVORING TO PUT PRESSURE ON NORTH AMERICAN TO PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION THEY HAVE SOLD. HOWEVER, CIVILAIR FORESEES THAT IT MAY HAVE TO ISSUE ORDER TO KLM OR OTHER AIRLINE DURING WEEKEND TO PROVIDE LOW-COST TRANSPORTATION TO NEW YORK BECAUSE OF PLIGHT OF TRAVELLERS. THEY HAVE ASKED THAT CAB BE INFORMED AND ARRANGE FOR LOW-COST TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION IN CASE NETHERLANDS AUTHORITIES FIND IT NECESSARY. END SUMMARY.

1. GROUP OF 53 STRANDED AMERICAN TRAVELLERS CAME TO LIGHT AT SCHIPHOL AIRPORT EARLY AUGUST 2. THEY HAD TRAVELLED FROM U.S. TO EUROPE BY VARIOUS CARRIERS AT CHARTER OR STUDENT RATES AND FOR VARIOUS REASONS HAD BOUGHT TICKETS FROM NORTH AMERICAN TRAVEL OF AMSTERDAM OR OTHER TRAVEL AGENTS FOR ONE-WAY RETURN PASSAGE TO NEW YORK. NORTH AMERICAN CONSOLIDATED THE GROUP OF SALES AND, AS RELATED BY MCCLEARY OF NORTH AMERICAN, SENT MONEY IN AMOUNT OF SOME \$21,000 TO EDMONDS TRAVEL, INC., 152 W. 42ND ST.,

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NEW YORK, FOR PURCHASE AT U.S. RATES OF RETURN TRAVEL FOR

THESE INDIVIDUALS FROM KLM. EDMONDS TRAVEL REPORTEDLY SENT NECESSARY CHECK TO KLM BUT CHECK BOUNCED AND EDMONDS TRAVEL IS ALLEGEDLY BANKRUPT. MCCLEARY CLAIMS NORTH HAS NO FUNDS FOR FURTHER FINANCING OF THIS TRAVEL. HE PAID THEIR HOTEL EXPENSES NIGHT OF AUG 2 AND STATES HE INTENDS TO FLY TO NEW YORK POSSIBLY THIS EVENING TO TRY TO RETRIEVE MONEY FROM EDMONDS. HE STATES THAT EDMONDS TRAVEL, INC. IS IATA TRAVEL AGENT AND CONSEQUENTLY BONDED.

2. CIVILAIR STATES THAT NORTH AMERICAN HAD TRIED TO ARRANGE ONE-WAY CHARTER FROM BRUSSELS TO NEW YORK FOR PART OF GROUP. BELGIAN CIVILAIR HAD CONTACTED DUTCH CIVILAIR AND HAD BEEN TOLD BY LATTER THAT GROUP WAS NOT CHARTERWORTHY. AS RESULT OF REFUSAL OF BELGIAN AUTHORITIES, NORTH AMERICAN TRIED AND IS TRYING TO ARRANGE LOW-COST TRANSPORTATION VIA KLM. ON BASIS OF PART EXPERIENCE WITH NORTH AMERICAN TRAVEL, CIVILAIR HAS LITTLE HOPE THAT THIS FIRM CAN BE FORCED TO PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION OR REFUND MONEY BUT IS AVOIDING RESCUE OPERATION AS LONG AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO PUT MAXIMUM PRESSURE ON THEM. SINCE MANY OF GROUP HAVE ALREADY BEEN DELAYED SEVERAL DAYS AND HAVE EXHAUSTED THEIR FUNDS, CIVILAIR FORESEES THAT IT MAY BE FORCED TO ORDER KLM OR OTHER AIRLINES TO PROVIDE REDUCED RATE TRANSPORTATION TO NEW YORK, PROBABLY SOME TIME DURING THIS WEEKEND. VAN GROOTEL OF CIVILAIR HAS POINTED OUT TO EMBASSY THAT SUCH AN ORDER WOULD BE OPERABLE ONLY IF CAB AUTHORIZED LOW-COST TRANSPORTATION FOR THIS GROUP IN CASE AND AT SUCH TIME AS CIVILAIR NETHERLANDS FINDS IT NECESSARY FOR WELFARE OF PASSENGERS TO INITIATE RESCUE OPERATION.

3. WE HAVE ALERTED PAA TO THIS SITUATION SO THAT THEY COULD BE READY TO PROVIDE SPACE IN CASE CIVILAIR INITIATES RESCUE. SIZE OF GROUP HAS APPARENTLY DWINDLED FROM 53 TO 50 AND OTHERS MAY OBTAIN FUNDS FOR NORMAL PASSAGE WITHIN DAY OR TWO. BUT SIZABLE GROUP REMAINS UNDER CONDITIONS BECOMING MORE AND MORE DIFFICULT. REQUEST IMMEDIATE CAB CONSIDERATION AND ADVICE.
TANGUY

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